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**NEWS RELEASE**

# Judd Gregg

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

*November 3, 2003*

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## **SENATORS GREGG AND SUNUNU ANNOUNCE \$2.5 MILLION FOR PILLSBURY-SUNAPEE HIGHLANDS APPROVED BY CONGRESS**

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senators Judd Gregg (R-NH) and John E. Sununu (R-NH) today announced that the U.S. Senate has approved \$2.53 million to protect the Pillsbury-Sunapee Highlands, nearly 10,000 acres of woodlands reaching from Mount Monadnock to Mount Sunapee, with stretches abutting both Pillsbury and Sunapee State Parks, in the Fiscal Year 2004 Interior Appropriations bill through the Forest Legacy program. The measure, which passed the full Senate by an overwhelming margin late today, contains \$5.88 million for New Hampshire projects and now heads to the White House for the President's signature.

Senator Gregg, who included the funding as a member of both the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior and Interior Conference Committee, stated, "The purchase of a conservation easement on the Pillsbury-Sunapee Highlands is the result of the tremendous work being done at the local level, including the private landowners and community-based organizations, who serve as stewards for this land. Their work, and today's final approval of the funding by the Senate, ensures that generations of Granite Staters will continue to have access to this beautiful land for a variety of recreational activities including fishing and hiking. I am pleased to have been able to include these funds in the measure and congratulate all those involved in this project." Earlier this year, Senator Gregg called on the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior to dramatically increase funding for the Forest Legacy program.

"This funding will play a critical role in furthering the goals of the Pillsbury-Sunapee Highlands conservation project - an ongoing effort to preserve thousands of acres in one of the largest remaining contiguous blocks of forest in southern New Hampshire," said Senator Sununu, who earlier this year urged Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies, to support funding for this project and others in the legislation. "I remain a strong supporter of the Forest Legacy program, which is a key to the effective stewardship of New Hampshire's natural resources, helping us set aside important land for the enjoyment of current and future generations."

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Upon initial approval by the Senate Appropriations Committee earlier this year, Jane Difley, President of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, stated, "Once again Senator Gregg has demonstrated his extraordinary commitment to conservation in New Hampshire by

securing much needed funding for this project. We're extremely pleased that he was able to find funding for the Pillsbury-Sunapee Forest Legacy Project, which, at nearly 10,000 acres, represents one of southern New Hampshire's largest land conservation initiatives in history. Year-in, year-out we look to Senator Gregg to find a way, even in tight fiscal times, to help make these projects happen. We greatly appreciate his leadership."

The Pillsbury-Sunapee Highlands agreement has helped spur other landowners in the area to commit to protecting an additional 2,500 acres, either through outright land donations or easements. Combined with land already protected in the State Parks, the entire Pillsbury-Sunapee forest area covers 25,000 acres that remain unbroken by development - a critical feature for wildlife habitats. While the landowner will continue to own the land and harvest timber, the easement will prevent development and require that it remain open for public recreation, including hunting, fishing, hiking and snowmobiling.

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